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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet from the Colorado State Board of Education lists activities that parents and caregivers should see in schools that are providing high-quality care and education for young children. The quality indicators are listed by age group (infant/toddler, 3- to 5-year-olds, 6- to 8-year-olds) and are presented as responses to the question, "When visiting a program, do you see?" Recommended activities for all age groups involve respect and responsiveness toward every child and providing appropriate educational materials. The pamphlet concludes with a list of quality indicators for all early education and care programs and for schools that are ready to teach children. (EV)

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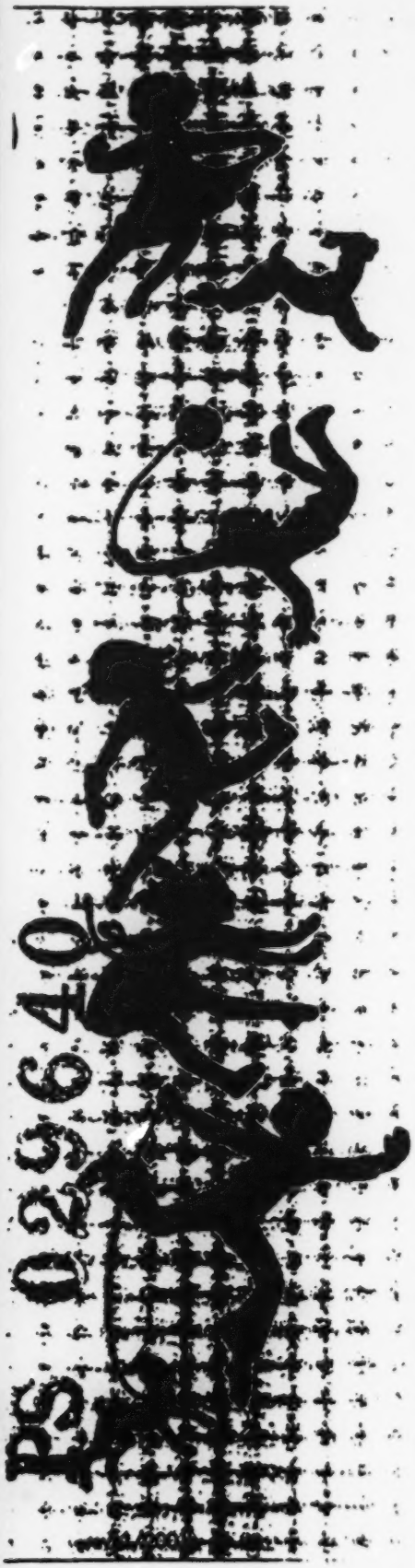

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Quality Early Childhood Care & Education

Will you know it when you see it

Indicators from Colorado's Quality Standards

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The Colorado Quality Standards for recommends looking for

When visiting an infant/toddler program, do you see:

- Staff showing affection and respect to children by:
  - ➤ listening to them
  - ➤ quickly comforting them when they are unhappy
  - ➤ holding, touching, talking and singing to them?
- Staff repeating the sounds infants make or helping toddlers name things?
- Growing independence supported by babies being encouraged to finger-feed themselves and toddlers feeding themselves?
- A variety of materials available for infants, including squeak toys, cuddly toys, music, mobiles, unbreakable mirrors, pictures, crawling areas, cause and effect materials, and little slides and tunnels?
- A variety of materials available for toddlers, including push-pull toys, stacking toys, picture books, music, puzzles, telephones, dolls, large paper and crayons, sand and water equipment?
- Infants and toddlers trusting adults and turning to them for help?
- Infants and toddlers choosing their own materials?

When visiting a program for three to five year olds, do you see:

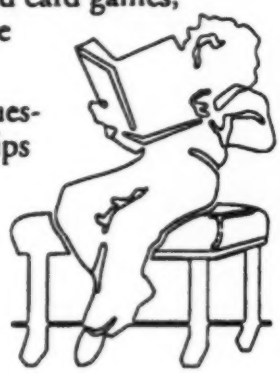
- Staff talking with individual children, using their names and encouraging them to talk about themselves (in their own method of communication—native language, sign language, etc)?
- Staff on children's eye level?
- Humor recognized and encouraged?
- Children helped to talk and play together?
- Children encouraged to dress themselves, pick up their own materials, serve snacks and meals?
- Dolls, posters, and books that illustrate many cultures?
- Appropriate materials available including active play equipment, blocks, puzzles and manipulative materials, picture books, tapes, records, art materials, musical instruments, dolls, dress-up clothes and furniture, and sand and water equipment?

Early Childhood Care and Education these indicators of quality:

- ☐ Activities that promote creativity rather than displaying models for the child to copy?
- ☐ Activities that help preschoolers learn about sorting and classifying, counting, time and seasons, the life cycle of plants or pets, and their own neighborhoods?
- ☐ Preschoolers being supported in resolving their own conflicts?

When visiting a program for six to eight year olds, do you see:

- ☐ Staff nurturing children's capacities to solve problems, evaluate choices, make decisions and take risks?
- ☐ Staff showing interest in children's activities outside of the program setting?
- ☐ Opportunities and time each day for conversations between children and adults based on the child's interests?
- ☐ Children having opportunities to perform responsible jobs and participate in community activities?
- ☐ Materials and activities including books, play equipment such as bats and balls for organized games, construction materials for woodworking; blocks, materials for art and science projects, dramatic play, and cooking; records and tapes; musical instruments; board and card games; math manipulatives; literature selections and reference materials, writing materials and tools?
- ☐ Activities that encourage children to think, reason, question and experiment—such as cooking, gardening, trips within the community, and special visitors?
- ☐ Children trying new things, taking risks, solving problems and discovering how their world works?
- ☐ A room where children are busy, self-directed, and intent on their activities?



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When considering early childhood care and education programs for any young child, keep these indicators of quality in mind:

- ☐ Stable, consistent relationships are established between children and adults.
- ☐ Class sizes are small.
- ☐ Children with a variety of abilities and needs are welcomed and participate fully in all groups.
- ☐ Every child has an individualized learning plan with any necessary modifications being made in the environment, schedule, and activities to meet that child's special needs.
- ☐ Staff have ongoing opportunities to plan their activities and to increase their own knowledge about their work.
- ☐ Activities related to ethnicity and culture are integrated on a daily basis, highlighting contributions of all diverse groups.
- ☐ Children of both sexes are provided equal opportunities to take part in all activities.
- ☐ Positive guidance techniques are used such as redirection; planning ahead; encouragement; consistent clear rules; natural, logical, and fair consequences.
- ☐ The overall atmosphere of the group is pleasant, while a range of emotions expressed by the children is recognized and accepted.
- ☐ Policies and practices are used that involve families in their child's learning and development, and that support families as valued partners in the educational process.

READY SCHOOLS

Parents and teachers are sometimes concerned about a child's ability or readiness to do well in school. **The Colorado Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education** provides examples of the kinds of activities parents should be able to see in schools that are ready to teach their young children.

Schools that are well-prepared, or ready, to help children learn are sometimes called ***Ready Schools.*** Here are some other ways that ***Ready Schools*** help children meet high standards.

Ready Schools:

- ☐ want every child to be successful;
- ☐ help children learn and make sense of their exciting world;
- ☐ teach in ways that will help children learn;
- ☐ expect to see improvement and learning;
- ☐ change what they're doing if children are not learning;
- ☐ work closely with other programs serving young children;
- ☐ help make changes between home and school easier;
- ☐ have strong leadership;
- ☐ support and provide professional development opportunities for all adults who work with children;
- ☐ are a vital part of their communities.

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